

1889, year of the Match Girls' Strike, of the Gasworkers' Strike and of the great epic of the London Docks, of course brought the idea of Trade Unionism, and of what lies or might lie, behind it, in some degree home to many minds, in and out of London, previously hardly aware of the existence of such a thing. No such external incident directed her intelligence to question and enquire. She was deeply stirred by the great London Dock Strike, of course; but while it was going on, she was at Dundee, attending the meeting there of the annual Trades Union Congress. What took her thither was neither journalistic curiosity, nor any sudden awakening of interest in the mind of that mysterious being, the British workman, such as was stunning many to fear and some to hope in the autumn of 1889. She had a clear problem before her mind. Engaged at the time in writing her book on Consumers' Co-operation, she had reached a notable conclusion. Thinking, without knowing that she was so doing, very much on the lines then occupying the brain of her future partner, she perceived that the Co-operators' nominal ideal of the "self-governing workshop" was rooted in the commonly held theory, accepted by Karl Marx from David Ricardo, William Thompson and Thomas Hodgskin, that "Labour is the source of all value." But this she found, "did not work!"

"What the Rochdale Pioneers had unwittingly discovered by the method of trial and error, was that the

essential element
in the successful conduct of production is the
correspondence of
the application of labour with some actually felt
specific desire

They were in fact Jevonians before Stanley
Jevons

To organise industry from the consumption end,
and place it,
from the start, upon the basis of * production for
use' instead of
'production for profit,' under the control and
direction, not of
the workers as producers, but of themselves as
consumers, was
the outstanding discovery and practical
achievement of the
Rochdale Pioneers "